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Take a drive — ♦ on the ♦ — Mountain Waters Scenic Byway



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USDA Forest Service
Nantahala National Forest
Highlands & Wayah Ranger Districts

Sample —♦ the ♦— scenery

The Mountain Waters Scenic Byway is a 61.3-mile drive that winds through southern Appalachian hardwood forest, two river gorges, and rural countryside. Traveling from Highlands to Almond the byway follows U.S. 64, old U.S. 64, SR 1310 (Wayah Road), and U.S. 19. Part of this nationally-recognized byway coincides with two State scenic routes.

Much of the byway travels through the Nantahala National Forest. National forest ecosystems are managed for many uses: recreation, timber, wildlife, water,

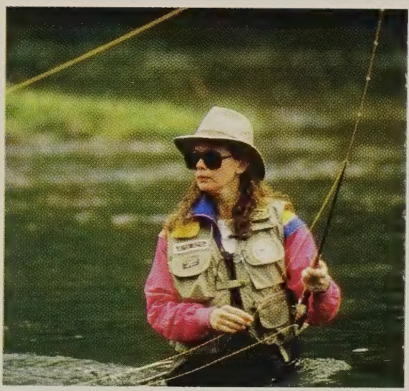
wilderness, and more. At overlooks and side routes, you may see signs of forest management activities. Here is a sample of attractions along the route:

CULLASAJA GORGE:

The first 7.5 miles of the byway travels through the beautiful Cullasaja Gorge. The winding road parallels the Cullasaja River and offers spectacular scenic views of the river and its waterfalls.

BRIDAL VEIL

FALLS: This often-photographed site is 1.2 miles west of



Dry Falls shower (top), Nantahala River rafting (bottom), Trout fishing on the Nantahala River (above), and hiking on the Appalachian Trail (right).



of Highlands on U.S. 64. A short road allows you to drive behind the thin "veil" of water falling from 120 feet.

DRY FALLS: You'll find this 75-foot beauty 2.1 miles west of Highlands on U.S. 64. From the parking area, a short paved trail leads you directly behind the waterfall.

CLIFFSIDE LAKE & VAN HOOK GLADE: Cliffside Lake Recreation Area is 4.4 miles west of Highlands and then 1.5 miles off U.S. 64. This area offers picnicking, swimming, fishing and hiking. You can camp nearby at Van Hook Glade.

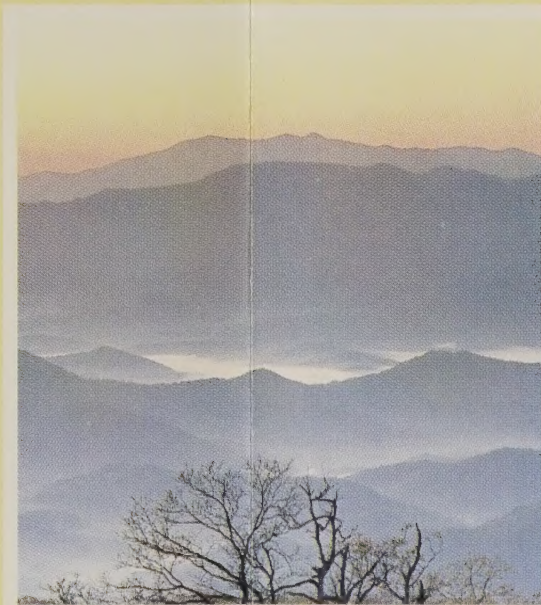
WAYAH CREEK: West of Franklin, the byway turns right on old U.S. 64, then left on SR 1310. SR 1310 (Wayah Road) parallels much of the 6-mile stream. The creek is a good fishing stream, but most of the streamside is private land and is posted "no trespassing". Along Wayah Creek is the **Arrowood Glade Picnic Area**. **Wayah Crest Picnic Area** is at Wayah Gap.

WAYAH BALD: A side trip to Wayah Bald is well worth the effort. From Wayah Gap, journey 1.3 miles up gravel Forest Road (FR) 69 and see the **Wilson Lick Ranger Station**. Built about 1913, Wilson Lick was the first ranger station in the Nantahala National Forest.

Continue another 3.2 miles up FR 69 to Wayah Bald. Take the short, paved trail to the historic Wayah Bald Fire Tower. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's, the tower provides a great view of the southern Appalachian Mountains in Georgia, Tennessee, and both Carolinas. You can picnic nearby at the **Wayah Bald Picnic Area**.

Two long-distance trails, the **Appalachian Trail** and the **Bartram Trail**, cross the mountain at the tower.

NANTAHALA LAKE: Located about 6 miles west of Wayah Gap, this lake has 29 miles of shoreline and offers fishing, and boating. Boat ramps are available.



Wayah Bald sunset

NANTAHALA RIVER: This mountain river offers great trout fishing in its upper and lower reaches. The stretch of river above the powerhouse has excellent catch-and-release fishing from spring until early summer.

NANTAHALA RIVER GORGE: The river draws more than 250,000 boaters who enjoy whitewater rafting, canoeing, and kayaking. Many people begin their trip from the Nantahala River Launch Site at

the beginning of the 8.5-mile whitewater run, where changing rooms and flush toilets are available. About 2.75 miles downriver is the Ferebee Memorial Picnic Area, which provides another launch and takeout area.

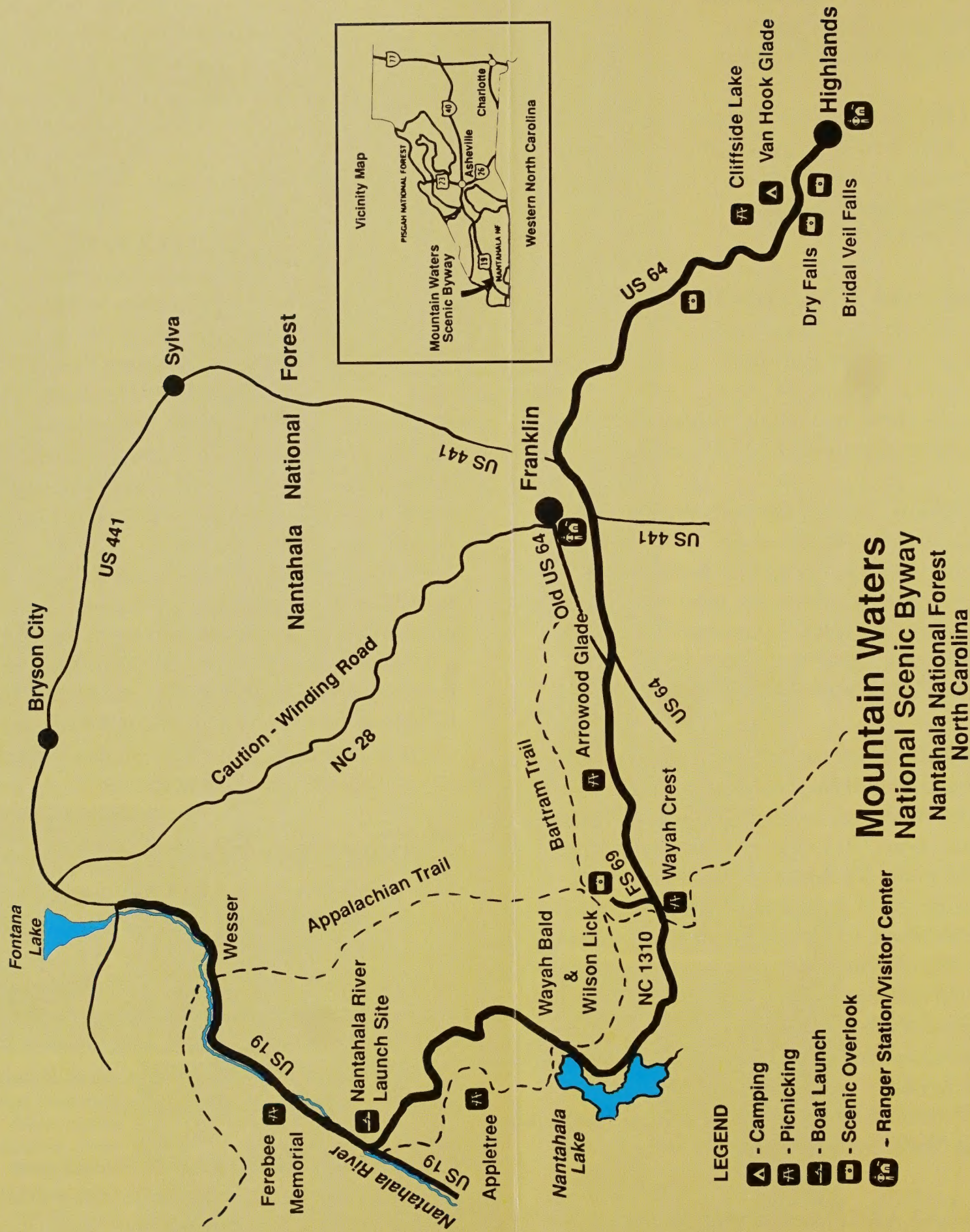
At the lower end of the Nantahala River, a commercial-only takeout and a private boater area are provided. From a wooden walkway, spectators get a thrilling view of the wild ride over the final series of rapids, including Nantahala Falls. Nantahala River outfitters, under Forest Service permit, can help plan trips to fit your skill level and provide any equipment you might need.

Explore on Foot

To experience the true richness of the forest along the byway, here is a sample of trails:

RUFUS MORGAN TRAIL: This 1-mile loop trail winds through mature hardwood forest to a waterfall. From SR 1310 (6.6 miles west of U.S. 64) turn left on FR 388 (Boardtree Road) and drive 2.2 miles to the trailhead.

CLIFFSIDE LAKE TRAILS: Stretch your legs on a short trail just off the Cullasaja Gorge. Choose the easy .75-mile loop that circles the lake or enjoy the view from the ridge along the moderate 1.5-mile Clifftop Vista Trail.



TRAVEL HINTS

CAUTION: Parts of the byway are narrow and curvy. Please stay in your lane. During the winter, occasional snow and ice may require the use of tire chains or 4-wheel drive vehicles.

CAMPING: **Van Hook Glade Campground** is open May to October with 20 family campsites. This campground is off U.S. 64 in Cullasaja Gorge, 4.3 miles west of Highlands. **Appletree Group Campground** is 2.5 miles off SR 1310 on SR 1401. The campground is open April to October for groups of 10 or more, by reservation only. For reservations, call the Wayah Ranger District at 704-524-6441. **Standing Indian Campground** is 12 miles west of Franklin off U.S. 64. To reach the campground, which offers 84 campsites, follow U.S. 64 west, turn left on old U.S. 64, and follow the signs.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE: For information on lodging, private campgrounds, gem mines, and golf courses, call these chambers of commerce: Franklin Area, 800-336-7829; Swain County (Bryson City) 800-867-9246; Highlands Area, 704-526-2112; Cashiers, 704-743-5191.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact the **Highlands Ranger District**, 2010 Flat Mountain Road, Highlands, NC 28741, 704-526-3765 or the **Wayah Ranger District**, 90 Sloan Road, Franklin, NC 28734, 704-524-6441.

WATERFALLS: Fatal Attractions

Getting too close to a waterfall is dangerous. Wet rocks are slick, and a slip above a waterfall can kill you. Stay on the established trails. Don't try to climb on rocks around waterfalls.

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